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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE 0521  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 11 PARIS 004357

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR  
NSC FOR NSA HADLEY  
DEPT ALSO FOR EUR, NEA, SA, EAP, PM, E, EB, G, WHA, AND AF

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TAGS PREL, OVIP, NATO, UNO, YI, RS, IR, IS, LE, FR

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SARKOZY'S FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE  
U.S.: POLICY COORDINATION WITH A SELF-CONSCIOUSLY INDEPENDENT FRANCE

Classified By: Ambassador Craig R. Stapleton for reasons 1.4. (b) & (d) .

¶1. (SBU) Introduction and Summary: The Nicolas Sarkozy who arrives in Washington November 6 is in robust political health. He completely dominates the political scene. He has quickly asserted French leadership in Europe and staked out new positions. We continue to believe that Sarkozy represents an important opportunity. Energetic, in full command at home, he is determined to make a mark on the world stage. PARIS 00004357 002 OF 011 such as the environment, GMOs and Turkey's relationship with Europe -- as demonstrations of France's independent policy course. His emphasis of

¶14. (U) In addition to setting the scene for Sarkozy's first official visit to Washington, this message iterates the state of play in a long list. PART ONE: SARKOZY FIVE MONTHS INTO HIS PRESIDENCY

¶15. (SBU) Nicolas Sarkozy's visit to Washington follows an exceptionally long "state of grace" (as the French call a political honeymoon), one

¶16. (SBU) Sarkozy's success is attributable to several factors. While Candidate Sarkozy ran a hard right election campaign geared to winning over the center-right.

¶17. (SBU) Immediately after his election in May, Sarkozy embarked on a policy of inclusiveness ("ouverture"), bringing in leading figures of the center-left.

¶18. (SBU) Over the past few weeks, shadows have entered this unnaturally bright picture. Current polling suggests that while support for Sarkozy

PARIS 00004357 003 OF 011  
insists that this time unions will not be able to scuttle this or any other part of the government's reform program -- while continuing to strengthen the economy.

¶19. (SBU) Sarkozy's unexpected willingness to compromise on several of his reform measures may signal recognition of the hard economic realities.

¶20. (SBU) The transport unions are but one of the constituencies Sarkozy will offend in shaking the French economy loose from policies that have been in place for too long.

¶21. (SBU) France's broader economic environment will not make the reform process any easier. Having promised the electorate measures that would

¶22. (SBU) Sarkozy is keen on unleashing market forces to reinvigorate the French economy, but he is less than laissez-faire when it comes to regulation.

¶23. (SBU) At the macroeconomic level, Sarkozy has been highly critical of the European Central Bank's tight money, strong Euro policy and he is agreed Eurozone commitments to bring budgets back into balance. In both cases, Eurozone partners have little recourse and France can ride for

¶24. (SBU) The U.S.-French economic relationship remains robust, with over \$1 billion in commercial transactions per day taking place between the two countries.

¶25. (C) On permanent overdrive and intense in the best of times, Sarkozy's recent divorce raises questions about his ability to maintain his energy levels.

¶26. (C) Notwithstanding the debate swirling around him and his slight decline in the polls, Sarkozy's political health remains strong. He continues to be a force to be reckoned with.

PART TWO:

PARIS 00004357 005 OF 011  
KEY POLICY ISSUES: WHERE THEY ARE AND WHERE WE WANT THEM TO BE

¶27. (C) The White House has already publicly enumerated key topics on the visit agenda: Afghanistan, Iran, Middle East Peace, Lebanon, Darfur,

¶28. (C) Iraq: The sudden and dramatic French decision, days following the President's meeting in Kennebunkport, to break with previous policy

¶29. (C) Iran: Sarkozy's blunt language on the "unacceptability" of a militarily nuclear Iran, and the need to maintain maximum pressure on the

PARIS 00004357 006 OF 011  
ability to influence Iranian choices, and how best to maintain international pressure toward that end. Having just met with Israeli PM Olmert to discuss the situation in Lebanon, Sarkozy has shown a willingness to work with the U.S. to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict. He has also

¶30. (C) NATO: In one of his first acts as President, Sarkozy launched a defense "white paper" commission to review France's defense and security policies. The commission's goals are to 1) strengthen European defense structures by developing Europe's own capabilities to plan and carry out defense and security operations, and 2) seeking French representation in the highest "decision making posts of NATO." The MFA and defense establishment uniformly caution us against

¶31. (C) Afghanistan: After a moment of hesitation during his Presidential campaign, Sarkozy now publicly highlights the importance of French involvement in the conflict. PARIS 00004357 007 OF 011  
calls for a more "comprehensive Afghanistan strategy," integrating military support and civilian reconstruction, and including a timeline for a long-term commitment.

¶32. (SBU) Environment/Climate Change: Climate Change: On his election day, Sarkozy called for a greater U.S. leadership role on climate issues.

¶33. (C) Democracy Promotion/Burma: Under President Sarkozy, the French position on Burma has converged with that of the U.S. France vigorously supports the U.S. position on Burma.

¶34. (C) Russia: During his first presidential visit to Russia on October 9-10, Sarkozy's advisors were reportedly struck by Putin's defiant attitude. PARIS 00004357 008 OF 011  
from the Chirac era. Sarkozy has abandoned Chirac's notion of Russia as a counterweight to the U.S., and does not shy away from directly addressing the Russian president.

¶35. (C/NF) Georgia: In Moscow October 9-10, Sarkozy told Putin that France opposes full NATO membership for Georgia (although we have been assured that the French government remains concerned over the Russian threat to suspend participation in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe).

¶36. (C) Kosovo: This is an opportunity for the President to reaffirm Sarkozy's commitment to an independent Kosovo. Sarkozy has stated numerous times that he supports the independence of Kosovo. PARIS 00004357 009 OF 011  
independence.

¶37. (C) Missile Defense: The French agree that Russia's objections to the planned system are politically driven, reflecting a Russian view of

¶38. (C) CFE: The French government remains concerned over the Russian threat to suspend participation in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. PARIS 00004357 010 OF 011  
SIPDIS November 5-6 to promote constructive dialogue leading to a comprehensive political solution. These efforts are seen as key to keeping all parties involved in the process.

¶39. (C) Lebanon: Sarkozy has not been as closely associated as FM Kouchner with French efforts to help Lebanon elect a new president and emerge

SIPDIS over Lebanon continue, although we differ over tactics and the risks attached to any strategy that would allow the majority to elect a p

¶30. (C) Middle East Peace Process: Sarkozy will want to hear about our efforts to convene a regional meeting in support of Israeli/Palestinian  
PARIS 00004357 010 OF 011  
however, eager to play some sort of role. Sarkozy has taken to using his bona fides as a "friend of Israel" to call on it for more "creativity"

¶31. (C) France-EU: President Sarkozy was instrumental in re-activating the moribund political reform process in the European Union with the Ju

¶32. (C) Colombia: Sarkozy promised during his presidential campaign to work for the release of Franco-Colombian FARC hostage Ingrid Betancourt

¶33. (SBU) GMO Moratorium: When Sarkozy came into office not only did he create a 'mega' environment ministry, but he also directed it to under

¶34. (C) Darfur (and Chad, Central African Republic): Sarkozy demonstrated an immediate renewed interest in Africa

PARIS 00004357 011 OF 011  
upon entering office, with France calling for and organizing the June 25 ministerial conference on Darfur, which served to refocus internationa

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Stapleton